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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on where and how to prompt the political process to respond to the demands of the millions of citizens engaged or wishing to participate in lifelong learning. As in other kinds of issues, there are four major ways to influence policy: legislative, administrative, judicial, or electoral. Students and instructors in the wide range of institutions and settings of the learning society can organize themselves into groups called Learning Societies to promote the advancement of lifelong learning. Not only could Learning Societies organize themselves around political issues but they can also serve as umbrella organizations for a variety of learning activities which may be desired though unavailable in the local community. A Learning Society can be attached to a free university, learning exchange, adult education center, or some other similar group. A more powerful alternative or supplement to the private Learning Society is the selection of a Community Learning Opportunities Council (CLOC) by the Mayor, City Manager, County Executive, or other executive officer or responsible body. The goal then is to establish as local, State, and Federal policy that every individual has the right to learn. (A lifelong learning platform presents 20 goals.) (Author/LH)

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POLITICS AND LIFELONG LEARNING:

An Exploration of

Citizen Strategies

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POLITICS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

The opening of the floodgates of "the learning society" is coming soon. And beyond a doubt, a good part of that renaissance will be political. Political in the sense that you cannot involve millions of people - voting people - in this country without getting political. Political in the sense that you cannot alter the missions of major public institutions such as universities, schools, museums, and libraries without striking a political stance. And as the benefits continue to expand for those who are well off, the demands for equal access to lifelong learning will prompt new pressures on the political system to establish the opportunity to learn as a lifetime right for all people.

This article is about where and how to prompt the political process to respond the the demands of the millions of citizens engaged or wishing to participate in lifelong learning. A study undertaken for the Commission on Nontraditional Study in 1972 estimated that close to 80 million adults between the ages of 18 to 65 are "would be learners" compared with slightly over 32 million who are engaged in learning projects. Of the learners, 95% wanted to continue some sort of learning activity.[1] This article is dedicated to those who are frustrated "would be learners" and those "learners" who want to create new alternatives. There are no new tricks. Politics here uses the same tactics that people have been using for years to get a municipal library established, to stop an expressway, or to protest the inadequate efforts of government regulatory agencies. It could be the techniques of the Abolitionists, the Suffragettes, Horace Mann, or Ralph Nader.[2]

Democratic politics is the process of people expressing their will. It is legions of "ordinary" people speaking up. For a number of years now, people have been marching with their feet to declare their support for a learning society. Estimates vary from the conservative estimate of the U. S. Office of Education of over 15 million participants to the broadly defined estimate of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education of 73,800,000

program enrollments in 1972. Yet the opportunity exists to speak out in a more patently political fashion within the halls of legislatures, in the agencies of public service, and in the programs of business and labor. This article first describes the variety of issues and forums for the advocate of lifelong learning and then approaches the issue of how citizens can band together to promote their concerns.

In some ways, the next stage is already here. It is only recently, that the forgotten students of postsecondary education- the part time students - are eligible for Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG). Congress remains sensitive to the part time degree credit students in financial aid programs. External degree programs and similar programs are receiving new support and are in public institutions in almost every state in the union. Still there is much, much more that needs to be done.

In addition to there being a political way to approach lifelong learning, there is a lifelong learning politics. It says that life is a continuum with an interplay of opportunities to participate in learning, work, and leisure. It flows with a sense of social justice which allows access to knowledge to all citizens and not just a few. It is committed to the principles of equal opportunity. It is a mechanism for people to find satisfying work roles. It is a mechanism for involvement in the growth of communities. All of these make up a politics of human choice and potential.

INFLUENCING POLICY

As in other kinds of issues, there are four major ways to influence policy: legislative, administrative, judicial, or electoral. A combination of them might be appropriate in any situation.

In legislative battles for programs that support the principles and programs of lifelong learning, the amount of funds provided may not be the only issue. Assuredly, if there is no or insufficient funds to make legislative intent public reality then skimpy allocations should be fought. There are, however, four main questions concerning legislation which should be asked.

1) Are the guidelines of the legislation broadly conceived? An example of the contrary is tax legislation which requires tax deductible educational expenses to be directly job related. That means that a man who serves as an executive of a firm can take a Harvard Business School management course and write off the expenses while his secretary who has the qualifications and a strong interest to become an executive cannot. Capital investments are deductible expenses but human investments are not. A simple change of the Internal Revenue Service Code, Section 212 (f), from strictly job related to career related would open up many possibilities for educational and vocational advancement.

There are other sections which need to be changed as well. The same thing occurs with unemployment insurance and welfare recipients. The red tape involved in receiving permission to study while unemployed is enormous.

2) Are there unreasonable age restrictions in such areas as admissions and financial aid which deny access to education on the basis of need and merit? Financial assistance for older students should take into account opportunity costs which increase with age, dependents, and greater earning power.

Open programs must be effective in recruiting a diversity of people and meeting their needs. Some states and many schools now open their classes on a space available status to persons over 65 years of age for free. If your state, school system, or college does not have such a policy you should lobby to see it adopted. Then make sure that efforts are made to involve older adults in planning for programs.[3]

3) Are there de facto or de jure inflexibilities in where and when the education takes place effectively ruling out significant adult participation? As in the case of local school districts who often think only in terms of young children, even though the restriction is not mentioned in the law, the lack of a mandate for flexible scheduling means that adults are not welcome. A sound policy would require that the service be open to all who need it, not just those who fall within daytime participation.

4) Does the legislation promote an integrated approach to education or does it set up another track? The divisions between primary, secondary, postsecondary and adult educational institutions, as between academic and vocational tracks within them, are too far apart as it now stands. The division between formal and non-formal education is also an often ambiguous distinction from the perspective of learning rather than structure. Legislation should promote the synergetic coordination of all learning resources in a community and promote the mobility of individuals between various kinds of educational experiences. This can be done through a coordinating body such as the Community Learning Opportunities Council described later on in this article.

These four questions provide both pitfalls to watch out for and articles that should be included in sound legislation. They could affect legislation on a local, state, and federal level. They can affect vocational and adult education laws, welfare and social security benefits, employee training acts, special programs for older adults and veterans of the armed forces, school and college legislation, and tax laws among others. It is important to note that due to the broad scope of content and methods which are employed in lifelong learning action might be necessary on laws which seem obscure. Many laws dealing with special problems also mandate funds for training.

There are other ways to use legislative action. Representative oversight authority allows officials to hold hearings on various issues. You can appear at legislative hearings where issues that affect lifelong learning are being considered. Or have a friendly legislator introduce a bill mandating greater support by public agencies for lifelong educational opportunities. Testimony then can be generated around that measure. Further, in the reconsideration of school and higher educational mandates and appropriations, citizens can demand that more attention be given to the elements of an integrated system of lifelong learning.

Local groups can legislatively promote the development of active adult learner programs in the libraries or for greater support of the continuing and extension programs of community colleges. Those without a high school diploma are shortchanged in this society. There are 58 million people over 18 years old who do not have at least a secondary school education. Jobs are hard for them to get. And if they do choose to go back to school they receive second class education. Local citizens groups should petition school board officials to provide the same amount of per pupil expenditure for adult returnees as for regular students. It is time to discard the notion that education is a hit or miss proposition.[4]

On a statewide level, lobbying efforts should urge that the Continuing Education Unit, a measure of non-credit learning, be used as a yardstick for the financial support of non-credit continuing education programs. The State of Georgia already does this. State planning agencies should be directed to find ways to diversify educational offerings and insure the coordination of their services. State and local governments should take the lead by providing liberal educational benefits to their employees.

The federal government has a long tradition of promoting equal educational opportunity. Funds should be made available to low income persons who want to engage in continuing education. It should direct its resources to find ways to overcome the class and race stratification of the learning society. Minority and poor people are largely in manpower and vocational training programs while white and middle class people receive the greatest benefit of continuing education programs.

Further, the scattering of programs throughout the federal government makes for waste and incoherence of policy. The federal government spends billions of dollars on adult and continuing education if training of personnel both civilian and military is included. Yet, as in much of this field, little is done to insure that the programs are of the highest quality and that needless duplication is avoided. Both the National Advisory Council on Continuing and Extension Education and the National Advisory Council on Adult Education have repeatedly urged that these two actions - full opportunity and efficient administration - take place.[5] In addition, the federal and state tax laws should be amended to provide for persons who earn under a certain income the ability to deduct a specific amount for educational expenses.

All legislative action needs the continuous pressure of citizens before any measure has any chance of effectively altering the present situation.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADVOCACY

There are two kinds of administrative advocacy - from within and from without. On the inside, administrators can do a lot themselves. Almost all of the time, the law provides great leeway in deciding how a program will be implemented. The administrative decision about how and who the program will serve may be more important than the law itself. Well informed bureaucrats who seek advice from potential consumers and competent practitioners can help in the creation of a learning society. Guidelines which they draw must respond to the same set of concerns involved in legislation. And on a smaller level, things can begin at the office by encouraging employees to further their education.

If an administrator is ill informed or too set in his or her ways, then tactics of administrative advocacy from without have to be used. First accurate information should be gathered and an alternate position prepared. If a presentation does not work, citizens groups can gather larger public support among other citizens and with legislative officials who control the budget of the agency. Always get everything agreed on in writing. If it is a lower level official who is giving you trouble, go see the head of the agency. If internal bargaining seems to be getting nowhere, inform the local paper of the squabble. Make sure that public hearings on regulations are attended by proponents of lifelong learning.

Getting a law passed is only a part of a political battle. The next stage is to make sure that it is effectively implemented and written into clear guidelines. Still more needs to be done by the conscientious advocate and the performance of the agency must be constantly monitored to make sure that well written guidelines are effectively carried out. Of course, an administrator who uses imagination and foresight by providing effective programs of action makes the job of citizens much easier.

JUDICIAL ACTION

One of the larger issues of free learning is the ability to be judged on what you know and how you perform instead of ambiguous credentials. In this regard, people who have learned in a nontraditional manner and are denied employment solely because they do not have the required certificate (High School Diploma, Associate of Arts, Baccalaureate, etc.) may have grounds to sue. The United State Supreme Court decided in Griggs v. Duke Power Company that entry requirements to a position be job related.

The Court said in its 1971 decision:

> "But Congress directed the thrust of the Act (1964 Civil Rights Act) to the consequences of employment practices, not simply the motivation. More than that, Congress has placed on the employer the burden of showing that any given requirement must have a manifest relationship to the employment in question. The facts of this case demonstrate the inadequacy of broad and general testing devices as well as the infirmity of using diplomas or degrees as fixed measures of capability".[6]

The case was decided within a larger issue of racial discrimination but the principle could stand by itself. This is an issue which a local legal aide lawyer or American Civil Liberties Union lawyer might take up for you. In a case involving racial or sexual discrimination, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Inc., or one of a number of feminist law firms might represent you. It is important to remember that such law suits are not easily brought and a competent lawyer should be consulted before any assertion of damages are made.

When legislation is passed which mandates attention to the issues of lifelong learning, and it is not being carried out, after all other channels have been exhausted, judicial action can be taken to force compliance with the law. Courts shy away from intruding on administrative affairs unless a compelling interest is shown. In the case of specific set asides or money designated for adult and nontraditional programs, there may be grounds for action if money is not being spent as written into law. The crucial point to keep in mind with seeking judicial remedies to problems is that it is a difficult road to travel and should be used only in extenuating circumstances.

ELECTORAL APPROACHES

Further support for lifelong learning can come from electoral efforts. Candidates for office should be urged to take stands on such issues as support for an Open University or External Degree Program, tax deductions for educational expenses, support for a Community Learning Opportunities Council, equal per pupil funding of adult education programs, and other important issues. A Lifelong Learning Platform should be prepared and candidates scored to determine support of that agenda. (See sample platform) Results should be released to local papers to pressure candidates into taking public stands.

As politicians recognize the potential number of voters who are participants or who are denied participation in the learning society, the platitudes of the politicoes might overshadow real committment. The wary citizen's group will keep them on their toes by releasing periodic press releases on the votes of legislators on key issues related to lifelong learning. A

permanent record will then be available for matching promises against voting records. All floor votes are open to the public. Some committees still meet behind closed doors, but most proceedings are available by writing the Clerk of the particular body or having your representative request copies for you if you cannot attend in person. A little research will reveal past stands on bills - but the problem in this whole area is separating out relevant sections from broadly based bills.

If citizens create the demand then politicians will be forced to respond. Advocates of lifelong learning should join platform committees of all political parties to insure strong planks on the learning society. Here as in most other areas of political effort, two points should be stressed. First, there is a strong demand among citizens that services be widely distributed and of high quality. Secondly, lifelong learning is a way to achieve other goals in the society as well - equal opportunity, a sound economy, strong communities, and a high quality of life. Armed with those sound assertions more and more campaigns will be run with the gamut of learning in the community as a priority issue.

INSTITUTIONAL ADVOCACY

There are a large number of institutions and organizations which can be organized to support lifelong learning either by their own activities or in attempts coordinated with other organizations. In fact, there are few places which do not have some sort of educational function. Whatever organization you belong to whether it is a lodge, women's group, or backpacking club, it can do something to advance lifelong learning. Those who provide good examples of learning in practice are as necessary to a political strategy as those who write letters.

A group of people could go to the local library and demand that the library be responsive to the needs of the whole community. Citizens should ask that the library organize itself to provide information and help for adult independent learners through a vigorous community wide campaign. The local library is a perfect center for a clearinghouse on educational activities. Many libraries are doing that at present and information is available.[7]

Universities and colleges which are aloof to the learning needs of the surrounding community should be challenged. The president of the university or the dean of the college should be confronted and asked to develop a responsive program. Representatives from the local community should be involved in planning proper programs. The special talents of the institutions should be used to provide a diversity of services. Universities should also be challenged if in order to expand their own treasury they encroach on programs which have flourished in the community for years. The question should be who can provide the best and most appropriate service. For example, if the college is a women's college, special programs might be arranged for women seeking to make a mid-career change. Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin is an excellent example of the many efforts

of women's colleges to involve women beyond the traditional college age in innovative programs.

The local museum can be coaxed into doing a lot more with their adult educational activities than they are presently doing. Staff or trustees of the museum should be urged to spearhead that effort.[8]

Businesses and government agencies have a great deal of available resources to provide educational experiences for their employees and for people in the community. A board room which is empty most of the time makes an excellent classroom. Cooperative education for young and old who would like to learn skills might turn unused machinery into a learning experience for the unemployed, the retired, or those seeking additional skills. Serious thought must be given to how work is carried out in order to effect greater worker satisfaction and increase productivity. Employees meeting on company grounds to discuss issues of mutual interest improves morale and contributes valuable learning experiences. A far more fundamental rethinking though would entail finding ways to make work a learning and growth experience for the employee.

There are a number of fine programs for tuition refund. Most are terribly underutilized. The reasons are clear and businesses should take steps to remove them. First, the worker must pay for the program out of pocket and then seek reimbursement. Secondly, the range of options are severely restricted and thirdly, the individual must pass the course. Of paramount importance, however, is the lack of promotion and counseling within businesses which offer tuition programs. The Kimberly Clark Corporation has dealt with all of these issues and has a much greater participation rate. Each employee has a several hundred dollar personal bank account which can be used for tuition, travel, books, and other necessary expenses for personal and career advancement. There are few restrictions on how and where the money can be used and it is available as needed, not after the course is through. The account wipes out at the end of each year and a new amount is placed in a refurbished account.[9]

There are many other things that business can do to promote such learning. Released time for educational purposes would also stimulate greater involvement. With the advent of the four day work week the possibilities are quite broad for imaginative educational programs. Businesses should make sure that Internal Revenue Service regulations will not prevent them from providing broadly defined tuition aid or educational sabbaticals. In New York State, the State Department of Education has evaluated the educational components of business and industry with recommendations for college credit.[10] Business organizations should urge the same apparatus in their own states. Both business and labor should urge the establishment of a National Commission on Work and Education which thrashes out sound federal policy for an integrated system of career and continuing education.

The labor unions can provide a strong impetus for worker based as well as general programs in the country. Some unions are doing excellent programs in recurrent or lifelong education. District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) in New York City have linked up with a local college, negotiated funds in their contracts, and provides first rate education in their union building. Some other examples of union initiatives are the external degree program with the AFL-CIO and the Union of Experimenting Colleges and Universities,or the Family Education Center of the United Auto Workers. The Electrical Workers in New York have an extensive education program including human development courses, high school equivalency, and cultural programs. All of these put together affect only a small portion of the organized work force in America. Educational counselors from the union membership on the production lines would provide support for workers seeking their high school diplomas or other kinds of education.[11] Strong support for pension reform and a recurrent education program which allows workers to take paid educational leaves with job security is essential. Labor should be pushing measures which provide income maintenance and tuition aid for unemployed people as is done in several European countries - including West Germany, France, and Great Britain. With insecure job markets, workers with diverse skills may avoid unemployment lines. The traditional concerns of negotiations- pay and job security - need to be expanded.

One of the greatest centers of adult learning since the inception of this country is the religious community. The educational programs that churches and synagogues offer remain the major source of continuing education for millions. They too can be urged to provide innovative programs which link into other structures in the community.

Professional associations represent an area of increasing continuing learning opportunities. In addition to the seminars which are sponsored by the associations to keep its members current, more and more are requiring further education for relicensing. This approach is antithetical to the principles of competency and free learning. Laws which require more education for relicensure should be opposed and replaced with regulations requiring demonstrations of continuing competency in the field. Professional associations whose memberships have to bear the full cost of continuing education should lobby for generalized support for continuing education and financial assistance to members who cannot afford the cost of further education.

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973 provides a mechanism for the training and public service employment of people who have been out of a job for a period of time. Citizen pressure must be maintained to insure that the jobs are truly educational for participants and that they do not become political patronage positions. CETA can make sure that unemployment is not necessarily unproductive. Welfare organizers should work to insure the ability of those on welfare

to receive further education and still get full benefits. The same is true with those who receive unemployment compensation. The amount of red tape involved is debilitating. Unemployed workers and welfare recipients should be fully informed of the provisions for education in their program.

Whether you work within any of the forums listed in the past few pages or not, the organizations that you do belong to can make their programs and wishes known to those who make policy for education and training. It takes a little ingenuity and often a lot of hard work to implement a worthwhile change in the law or in an educational program. Politics is not solely the glamour projects of introducing major legislative measures, spearheading statewide administrative actions, winning an election, or enjoining an illegal practice in court. It is the process of the interaction of people within their organizations and their communities. A political strategy for lifelong learning needs people willing to meet the challenges of organizational politics as well.

CITIZENS ORGANIZATION - LEARNING SOCIETIES

It is difficult to do all that has been outlined above unless there is a group in the community organized to apply concentrated pressure. Students and instructors in the wide range of institutions and settings of the learning society can organize themselves into groups called Learning Societies to promote the advancement of lifelong learning. Students in night courses and proprietary schools, patrons of museums and "Y's", artists, external degree students, adult educators, librarians, and a host of others can join together to design a strategy for advocacy in a particular area. There is already a Learning Society along similar lines in the State of Minnesota started by those concerned with education for the elderly as well as other citizens. [12]

Not only could Learning Societies organize themselves around political issues but they can also serve as umbrella organizations for a variety of learning activities which may be desired though unavailable in the local community. A Learning Society can be attached to a free university, learning exchange, adult education center, or some other similar group. Or it could be a free standing organization. The group may want to incorporate a coordinate body which is able to lobby under Section 501-C (4) of the Internal Revenue Code.[13] Such a setup will protect the tax deductible status of the main or parent organization. Consult a lawyer to determine proper limits if the group plans to actively support specific legislation.

There are many activities that a private group such as the Learning Society could undertake. What follows is a grab-bag of ideas which you should add onto:

- Try organizing the artists in town to support a publicity effort with large displays of public art which illustrates the creative potential of lifelong learners.

- Get together with people familiar with innovative approaches to education and organize seminars with local politicians as invited guests.

- Organize a citizen's hearing on the activities in the community. Make sure that there will be enough testimony about supply and demand. Also make sure that the local press is in attendance.

- Get the local newspaper and radio stations to sponsor educational events calendars listing the broad range of possibilities.

- Have an awards dinner where the ten best and the ten worst educational programs are announced.

- Set up a Learning Exchange.

- Organize petition drives to support community wide planning for lifelong learning.

- Set up a Learning Fair with representatives of the various opportunities in the area available to meet with interested participants.

- Establish a scholarship fund to foster nontraditional programs for nontraditional students.

COMMUNITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES COUNCILS (CLOC)

A more powerful alternative or supplement to the private Learning Society is the selection of a Community Learning Opportunities Council by the Mayor, City Manager, County Executive, or other local executive officer or responsible body. A Community Learning Opportunities Council (CLOC) serves to stimulate the community to teach and to learn. It is not restricted to the institutions of education though it is responsible for encouraging the possibilities for learning. It does not exist to proliferate distinctions but to coordinate them synergistically. Attached to a CLOC might be a sophisticated information center which matches the resources with the needs of the community.

Six functions seem necessary for the development and operation of the Community Learning Opportunities Council: articulation, planning, coordination, publicity, consumer advocacy, and information collection and dissemination.

Immediately the resources available in a community must be identified. Identification of resources means not only those immediate and obvious educational institutions but also those business, labor, and other institutions which have or could have a secondary educational function. Unused rooms in businesses, schools, union halls, libraries, and neighborhood centers form the nucleus of the facilities of any educational program. On the instructional side, the vast array of experience and talent located in an area should be enlisted. One of the goals of the CLOC is to convince citizens that their experiences are worth sharing. It is the encouragement of sharing that marks the human and the political side of a CLOC. A board which is widely representative of the public and composed of respected people in the community would encourage broad participation. The first task of the group is to find out what is available and to encourage the full use of existing resources. In most places that is a staggering revelation - positively or negatively.

Next, all of the organizations smoked out should be brought together in a cooperative fashion to work out the most effective use of resources and to encourage the greatest participation in those educational activities. A separate subcouncil of supplier organizations - broadly defined - should be created. They should have representatives on the main CLOC Board. It is important to emphasize that the purpose of the CLOC is not to undercut the independent learner, the private tutor, or the individual artist. In some fashion they should be represented as well.

One activity of the CLOC is to develop a unified publicity campaign. This would utilize major media such as newspapers and television and radio stations, as well as internal publications of major corporations, labor unions, and professional associations to encourage broader participation in community educational resources. Local newspapers should be asked to include a daily or weekly calendar of educational resources and events. If the newspaper is recalcitrant start a letters to the editor campaign. Local advertising people should be asked to develop effective promotional devices. Billboards, posters on buses, radio spots, and courses by newspaper are several ways to approach a media campaign. Some of the cost of advertising might be borne by a consortium of supplier organizations. Very often people are aware of several options in an area but it is unusual for them to have the whole sweep of events available to them.

To begin sound planning, the citizen's council should survey the learning opportunities, see where gaps in service exist, and determine how an effective system of service can be structured. Of prime importance in that planning is how to assure equal access to the poor, minorities, and workers. The CLOC should serve as a ongoing evaluator of the distribution and quality of educational service. Recommendations arrived at by the entire council should be forwarded and actively backed in appropriate forums.

The CLOC is an advocate of lifelong learning. The perspective of the Council is that of the citizen consumer and of community development. It should actively back the individual in the search for appropriate places to learn. It should remain aware of possible avenues for the growth of learning opportunities and prepare expert testimony to further it.

It is likely that the more this field grows the greater the possibility for fraud. The CLOC itself should investigate systematic abuses and propose appropriate remedies. It should turn over specific violations to state and local consumer protection agencies for prosecution or to the Federal Trade Commission. Non-profit educational institutions should be reported to professional accrediting associations and state authorities. In general, the CLOC should advocate the honest application of lifelong learning on both a grass roots level and in political institutions. The ability to request appearances before bodies should be written into the charter of the CLOC.

Another function of the CLOC might be to provide up-to-date and accurate information for citizens. This could take the form of a Learning Exchange with card files or a more sophisticated computer based system. Funds for such a project could come under the Educational Opportunities Centers funded in the Higher Education Amendments of 1972. By writing Congressman Albert Quie and Senator Claiborne Pell as well as your own representatives, citizens can urge that the law be expanded to provide funds for the large scale development of Community Learning Opportunities Councils with computer information systems. A simple computer program listing facts about programs, instructors, places, times, cost, financial aid, credit, and transportation routes would provide quick and up to date information for a large area. By using municipal, college, or business computers the hardware cost would be minimal. In fact, the cost of operating a full CLOC program with outreach counselors would be two to five hundred thousand dollars for an area serving up to several million people.

Few of the ideas put together here in a unique form are new. In fact, the City of Buffalo, New York in 1926 took a census of learning possibilities similar to much of the development going on today. Many of the commissions investigating educational reform have made similar suggestions.[14] The political constituency must be built to provide adequate funds for their development. An approach to lifelong learning which uses a piecemeal approach will be much too expensive and probably ineffective.

Both the private Learning Societies and the public Community Learning Opportunities Councils are ways for citizens to ban together to demand attention to lifelong learning. The numbers of groups in society which it bridges provides special challenges to those who begin them but that same character may prove to be the force for greater change and creativity.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The attempt to create a society where learning stands at the pivotal point of change of communities and individuals is a long process. It involves using many of the strategies and proposals mentioned in this article. Only one thing is sure. It will take a lot more than could be included in these few pages. It will take many more ways of getting the message across. It will take many more ways of creating learning situations. And it will take many more people than are actively working at it now. You can be part of this unfolding development in any number of ways.

Our goal then is to establish as local, state, and federal policy that every individual has the right to learn. That right needs to be supported throughout life. That learning should be allowed to flower as broadly as possible and citizens should be protected against unscrupulous practices which defraud citizens and the concepts of lifelong learning. Legislative, administrative, judicial, and electoral approaches will all be employed. First by building strong programs within a broad cross-section of organizations and then by constructing a coalition for generalized change, progress will be made in the direction of a learning society. There will be no one organization or one solution which will take us from here to there. There are many small steps lying inbetween.

The greatest problem attached to the politics of the learning society is the fact that most people do not consider themselves a part of it. There are no T-shirts proclaiming the "Learning Society - Class of 1976". Yet, it is also true that millions of people are engaged in a common activity - learning to find ways to improve their lives and those of the people around them. The way to organize for greater attention to the quality and distribution of learning in America is to recognize that "ordinary" people - those who form the ranks of the learning society and the voting rolls - can join together to make things change. It does not take a lot of people to form a Learning Society in your neighborhood. It does not take a lot of people to investigate and publicize the inadequate activities of public and private agencies. If the cause is right and the people support it, political change can come about by the determined actions of advocates.[15] Political approaches to lifelong learning can and will be done.

LIFELONG LEARNING PLATFORM

1. Establishment of Community Learning Opportunities Councils.
2. Government employee educational benefits widely available.
3. Tax benefits for participation in learning activities.
4. Use of educational and other coordinating agencies to provide for diversity and coordination.
5. Inclusion of part time students in all student financial aid programs.
6. Incentive grant programs for fuller participation of low income people in lifelong learning opportunities.
7. Opening up colleges and schools to those over 65 on a space available basis and supportive services provided.
8. Use of the public libraries and museums to promote lifelong learning.
9. Equal funding of returning drop outs seeking high school diplomas.
10. Consolidation of Government programs related to education and training into more efficient groupings.
11. Use of the Continuing Education Unit as a basis for government funding of non-credit educational offerings.
12. Elimination of red tape surrounding unemployment insurance and welfare recipients with assurance of full benefits for those attempting to gain new skills.
13. Prohibition of discrimination on the basis of degrees instead of demonstrated competancies and job skills.
14. Support for Open University and External Degree programs in higher education.
15. No course requirements for relicensure of professionals in place of demonstrated competancies.
16. Support for cooperative education for young and old students.
17. Evaluation of job related education for college credit recommendations.
18. Support for business and labor programs which provide tuition assistance, released time, or paid educational leave for workers.
19. Insure accountability of programs by mandating consumer protection agencies to deal strongly with fraud.
20. Establishment of National and State Commissions on Work and Education to bring business, labor, and education together to discuss large scale efforts at solutions.

REFERENCES

[1]The Commission on Nontraditional Study has done a number of studies. A series of them were collected in Planning Nontraditional Programs edited by Patricia Cross and John Valley (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1974.) The general report of the Commission on Nontraditional Study which has many useful recommendations is titled Diversity by Design (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1972).

[2]There really is not enough space to do justice to how to organize. Several books might be helpful in this regard. Especially the section on government advocacy in A Public Citizen's Action Manual by Donald Ross (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973) is excellent. A more nuts and bolts book is The Organizers Manual by the OM Collective (New York: Bantam Books, 1971). An organizer's techniques revolve around a lot of hard work and attention to detail. No book can provide magic solutions to provide instant change.

[3]The Institute for Lifetime Learning associated with the American Association of Retired Persons has been in this business a long time. They can be contacted at 1909 K Street, Washington, D. C.

[4]Willard Wirtz and the National Manpower Institute, The Boundless Resource (New York: New Republic, 1975).

[5]Copies of the annual reports of these two groups are available. To obtain them write:

National Council on Continuing and Extension Education
425 Thirteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20004

National Advisory Council on Adult Education
Pennsylvania Building, Suite 323
425 Thirteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20004

[6]Griggs v. Duke Power Co., Supreme Court of the United States, 1971. 401 U.S. 424, 91S. Ct. 849., if you want to look it up.

[7]The American Library Association and the College Entrance Examination Board have jointly started a program in a variety of cities to promote adult independent learning. For more information write:

Adult Independent Learner Project
College Entrance Examination Board
888 Seventh Avenue
New York, New York 10019

REFERENCES

[8]The political side of the Associated Councils on the Arts is the:

Advocates for the Arts
Room 820
1564 Broadway
New York, New York 10036

They might be able to help in organizing artists and museum people.

[9]There are many other aspects to this attractive plan. There are provisions for accumulating savings for the education of an employee, spouse or dependent. Another part of the program provides paid educational leave for employees with seniority. More information can be obtained from:

Kimberly Clark Corporation
Neenah, Wisconsin 54956

[10]The New York State Department of Education has "A Guide to Educational Programs in Non Collegiate Organizations", December, 1974.

[11]One of the places where a good deal of action and research has gone on is the Rutgers Labor Education Center, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903. Herbert Levine, the director of the Center, has done an extensive study of union educational programs both in the United States and abroad.

[12]The Minnesota Learning Society
Daniel Ferber
1568 Summit
St. Paul, Minnesota

[13]In order to incorporate a group which is tax deductible, the group should get a lawyer to incorporate under 501 C (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. This status prohibits the group from endorsing any political candidates or from using more than an insubstantial amount of its resources to influence legislation. Non-profit educational and cultural organizations exempt from federal taxes can publish non-partisan information on legislative activity without endangering its tax status. It is important that these organizational details be in order in the initial stages of the organization.

[14]Among the proposals were those suggested by George Nolfi and Valerie Nelson in Strengthening the Alternative Postsecondary Education System: Continuing and Part-Time Study in Massachusetts, (Boston: Massachusetts Advisory Council on Education, September, 1973), and the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education Towards a Learning Society, (New York: McGraw Hill, October, 1973). Some other programs worth mentioning are the Learning Exchange in Evanston, Illinios; the Regional Learning Service in Syracuse, New York; the PLATO project at the University of Illinois - Chicago Circle Campus; the Career Counseling Program

in Providence, Rhode Island; the Community Learning Center Project in New Hampshire; and the suggested work and education councils by Willard Wirtz, former Secretary of Labor; and Terril Bell, U. S. Commissioner of Education of which there are several examples including one in Springfield, Massachusetts.

15 Good luck! Those who are engaged in political promotion of lifelong learning should share their experiences. Send any comments, experiences, or suggestions that you might have to the author:

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Rutgers Labor Education Center
Ryders Lane & Clifton Avenue
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903